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ABSTRACT

This paper examines in detail how higher education serves the larger public good, focusing on how higher education assesses and accounts for its service to society. It begins with a brief description of how the civic education of students and institutional service to society are defined for the purposes of this paper. It then discusses assessment and accountability strategies, including the kinds of measures that tend to be the focus of most public reporting strategies. The civic education and service roles of higher education are not usually the focus of public reporting. When civic contributions are assessed, something else, whether service learning, campus, climate, student diversity, or "service" to the community, is measured. To build assessments of the civic contributions of higher education into reports of accountability, there are some obstacles that must be overcome. This paper identifies those obstacles and presents some strategies to build assessment and accountability capacities for the civic roles of higher education. The strategies are drawn from assessment models currently being used to measure specific dimensions of campuses' civic roles and activities. An appendix lists 14 resources for further information. (Contains 21 references.) (SLD)

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The Institute for Higher Education Policy

Contributing to the Civic Good

Assessing and Accounting for the Civic Contributions of Higher Education

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The New Millennium Project on Higher Education Costs, Pricing, and Productivity

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PREFACE

This working paper is one in a series that has informed the work conducted as part of The Institute for Higher Education Policy's *New Millennium Project on Higher Education Costs, Pricing, and Productivity.* Sponsored by The Institute for Higher Education Policy, The Ford Foundation, and The Education Resources Institute (TERI), the project is a multi-year effort to improve understanding and facilitate reform of the complex system for financing higher education.

The paper was prepared by Jane Wellman, with editorial support and guidance provided by Colleen O'Brien and Jamie Merisotis. A version of this paper will appear in Thomas Ehrlich's (editor) forthcoming book, *Higher Education and Civic Responsibility* (Oryx Press).

The *New Millennium Project* team is co-directed by Jamie Merisotis, President, and Jane Wellman, Senior Associate, at The Institute for Higher Education Policy. Project staff include: Colleen O'Brien, Managing Director; Diane Gilleland, Senior Associate; Thomas Parker, President of TERI; Katheryn Volle Harrison and Alisa Federico Cunningham, Research Analysts; and Christina Redmond and Mark Harvey, Project Assistants.

The project also is being guided by an Advisory Group of national experts in higher education. Advisory Group members include:

- Vera King Farris, President, Richard Stockton State College;
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- D. Bruce Johnstone, Professor of Higher Education, SUNY Buffalo;
- Gerald Monette, President, Turtle Mountain Community College;
- Barry Munitz, President and CEO, The J. Paul Getty Trust, *Chair*;
- Michael A. Olivas, William B. Bates Professor of Law, University of Houston; and
- Carol Stoel, Co-Director, Teacher Education, Council for Basic Education.

Contributing to the Civic Good: Assessing and Accounting for the Civic Contributions of Higher Education

Introduction and Overview

The first report in the *New Millennium* project, *Reaping the Benefits: Defining the Public and Private Value of Going to College* explored higher education's role in serving broad social purposes, examining both the public and private benefits of higher education. The report argued that the historic understanding that higher education benefits both society and the individual has given way to a primary focus on private benefits rather than broader public purposes. The second report, *The Tuition Puzzle*, explored how this shift has been accompanied by increased privatization of higher education's funding base. One consequence of the eroding public funding has been greater fractionalization of the revenue sources, as well as an erosion of general financial capacity to serve broad public purposes.

This paper examines in greater detail how higher education serves the larger public good, focusing on how higher education assesses and accounts for its service to society. It begins with a brief discussion of how the civic education of students and institutional service to society are defined for the purposes of this paper. It then discusses assessment and accountability strategies, including the kinds of measures that tend to be the focus of most public reporting strategies. Despite all the attention to assessment and accountability, higher education's civic education and service roles are not on the radar screen of these efforts. When civic contributions are assessed, *something else*—service learning, campus climate, diversity, student/faculty engagement, or "service" to the community, sometimes reported as faculty service to the institution—is measured. These assessments may provide some information about civic contributions, but only indirectly, and never about both the teaching and community service roles. Further, there are no "road maps" connecting institutional assessments with public accountability for the civic teaching and service roles. As a result, the responsibility to play a civic education and service role is generally missing from public policy discussions about the purpose and effectiveness of higher education.

In an era dominated by the twin themes of privatization and accountability, and in light of eroding public funding for higher education, it is essential to build assessments of the civic contributions of higher education into ongoing accountability reports. Yet assessing and accounting for civic contributions can be difficult; this paper identifies obstacles that need to be understood and overcome in order for these processes to begin. Because no models for documenting these contributions exist, this paper presents some strategies for building assessment and accountability

capacities for the civic roles of higher education. The strategies are drawn from assessment models currently being used to measure specific dimensions of campuses' civic roles and activities.

Defining the Civic Role: Civic Education and Community Service

Isolating higher education's civic roles is difficult to do because most of its activities serve public purposes in some way. The instructional mission—and particularly the mission to ensure access to low-income and minority students—serves a general public purpose. University research also is performed for the most part in the public domain and for the public good, even if it is funded by private resources. However, colleges and universities are not the exclusive or even predominant institutions in our society that serve the public through teaching, research, and service: proprietary and technical institutions also educate students; research is conducted both by government and the private sector; and philanthropic organizations such as charities and churches help society through community service. Further, there is considerable debate about the relative importance of higher education's civic role as compared to that of public elementary and secondary education and the philanthropic sector.

On the other hand, public and non-profit collegiate higher education institutions have broad civic purposes at the core of their missions that are not central to the purposes of these other institutions. The nexus of education, research, and service is the focus of this paper, in which the "civic contributions" of higher education mean both its civic education *and* institutional service roles. The "civic education role" is the broad-based education of students to be effective citizens in a democratic society, and "institutional service" is the combination of individual faculty, student, and staff efforts, as well as organized institutional activities that serve the community.

Many interesting questions may be raised about why higher education as a matter of public policy should have a civic role, since it is a function that is also performed by other social institutions. In addition, not all higher education institutions place the same priority on civic education and service; nor should they be expected to do so. (This paper avoids that debate, except to note that it exists.) The fact remains that higher education is the one endeavor that brings together teaching and credentialing functions with knowledge creation and preservation, alongside expected service to communities and the public. Consequently, it performs a unique civic role.

The National Assessment and Accountability Scene

The past 15 years have witnessed significantly increased attention to assessment and accountability in higher education. Unlike earlier eras when institutional research and evaluation capacities tended to be largely administrative responsibilities, newer approaches to assessment are designed to engage faculty and administrators in efforts to improve quality, particularly in teaching and learning. Accountability tools are used at the system and state levels to tie assessment to performance, not only for purposes of institutional improvement, but to guide state resource decisions and to enforce state standards for achievement.

Attention to assessment as a tool for improvement was promoted initially in the mid-1980s through a series of national reports that sounded an alarm about

the potential decline in the quality of American higher education; the alarm was accompanied by a call for reflection, evaluation, and reform. Prominent reports that continue to influence this discussion include the Association of American Colleges and Universities' *Integrity in the College Curriculum: A Report to the Academic Community* (1985), the National Institute of Education's Study Group on the Conditions of Excellence in American Higher Education's *Involvement in Learning* (1984), and the National Endowment of the Humanities' *To Reclaim a Legacy: A Report on the Humanities in Higher Education* (1984).

Assessment models have sprung up across the country, helping to guide institutions' inquiries about ways and means to improve the teaching and learning function. A quick scan of the papers presented since 1987 at the annual meetings of organizations devoted to assessment shows the intensity of interest in the topic and the range of ways in which institutions go about it. The assessments' focuses range from student skill assessment, to faculty, to curriculum. Some institutions' efforts are more topical: assessment of campus climate as part of the campus diversity initiative, or assessment of the effectiveness of service learning in improving academic learning outcomes. Over the years, the assessment agenda increasingly has become focused on ways to document student learning outcomes in terms of measurable competencies and other outcomes, in order to test the relative effectiveness of different modes of teaching and course delivery.[1]

Coinciding with the assessment movement has been growing interest in state-based accountability measures. While the terms of the conversation are rarely defined, the thread running through most state accountability reports is attention to assessment and improvement, resource use, and performance on state-defined standards. Further, whereas institutional assessments by nature focus on specific institutions, statewide accountability reporting results in interinstitutional comparisons on state performance measures.

A study by the National Center for Postsecondary Improvement at the University of Michigan reports that 42 states have postsecondary assessment policies in place and that most of them are moving from an exclusive focus on institutional assessment to linking assessment with accountability. The types of performance indicators that are being put into accountability frameworks reveal a good deal about the indicators that are most likely to be used to define the core enterprise, as well as to distribute resources. South Carolina and Tennessee are the two states that generally are perceived to have gone the furthest (for good or ill) to promote accountability measures. A review of the reporting format for those states shows the following measures:[2]

> **South Carolina:** Institutions must provide information on: instructional expenditures; curriculum; mission statement; plans and achievements; faculty credentials; faculty review, including student, peer, and post-tenure review; faculty compensation; availability of the faculty to students outside the classroom; *community and public service activities of the faculty for which no extra compen-*

1. The literature on assessment is substantial and includes some good material on trends in the assessment "movement." Interested readers should scan the web pages of the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE), the Association for Institutional Research, EDUCAUSE, the Association of American Colleges and Universities, and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

2. Nettles, 1997.

sation is paid; class sizes; student/teacher ratios; number of credit hours taught by faculty; ratios of full- to part-time faculty; use of best management practices; ratio of administrative to academic costs; reduction in "unjustified duplication" of course credits; amount of general overhead costs; high school class standing; GPAs and activities of students; graduation rates; employment rates; employer feedback on graduates; and the number of students continuing their education.

Tennessee: Institutions must provide information on: performance of graduates on approved standardized tests of general education; performance of graduates on approved examinations in major fields of study; satisfaction of alumni and enrolled students; program accreditation; quality of non-accreditable undergraduate programs by external review; quality of master's degree programs by external review; and level of minority enrollment and enrollment vis-a-vis mission [emphasis added].

It is not an exaggeration to say that civic teaching and service are scarcely on the national accountability agenda. Even South Carolina, which has taken a "kitchen sink" approach to accountability reporting, just touches upon the topic in a single measure of "service" that is related to faculty time yet does not "count" if it is compensated. Other forms of institutional service, including organized activities such as museums and galleries, public clinics, collaborations with schools, local economic development, and service to local government, are not mentioned; nor is any aspect of the teaching and learning role.

Why Assess Civic Contributions?

> "There is only one argument for doing something; the rest are arguments for doing nothing. The argument for doing something is that it is the right thing to do."
>
> —F. M. Cornford,
> *Microcosmographica Academica: Being a Guide for the Young Academic Politician*

Probably the best argument for assessing and accounting for higher education's civic teaching and service roles is that it will help to maintain these roles, which is the *right thing to do* because it is in the public interest for higher education to continue to serve in these civic and community roles. A second—and not insignificant—reason is that institutions increasingly are being held "accountable" for their accomplishments through performance-based report cards that link funding with evidence of results. Without some effort from within higher education to put its civic role into the accountability agenda, public and political measurement of higher education's "results" will continue to focus on performance measures that are much more utilitarian. In the words of the former inspector general for the U.S. Department of Education as he testified before Congress on accountability and quality, "If you can't count it, it doesn't count."[3] Higher education is at risk of being hoisted on the petard of empiricism; institutions that deliver educational "product" at the lowest possible cost—including vocational institutions that show good graduation and job placement rates—will look good. More important, the potential exists that those aspects of higher education's role that have yet to be objectified—in particular, the responsibility to educate students to be effective citizens and to serve the public interest—will erode further to be replaced by more utilitarian measures.

3. James Thomas, 1994.

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The public accountability agenda also needs to be engaged because of the erosion of funding for both public and private non-profit higher education. The social funding compact between states and traditional forms of higher education is based on an understanding that public investment is justified by higher education's broad social benefits. The investment is made in the form of direct appropriations in the public sector and through tax-exempt status in the non-profit sector. (The theory behind tax exemption for non-profit institutions is that the public services they provide otherwise would have to be paid for by the state). Although the state funding declines of the late 1980s and early 1990s have abated, the consensus is that the long-term funding trajectory for higher education is largely negative. Appropriations for public institutions have been made vulnerable by growing demands for entitlements and corrections.

Private non-profit institutions also face threats to their tax-exempt status—particularly local property tax exemptions—as cash-strapped municipal governments look for ways to bolster their revenues. Both public and independent higher education face competition from the "new providers" of postsecondary education, for-profit, vocational, and distance-based providers. These new providers claim to be able to deliver education more efficiently and effectively than traditional colleges, without benefit of either direct appropriations or tax-exempt status. Yet they typically do not claim to perform a broader civic or community service role, either in the education of students or in service to communities. If collegiate institutions are to retain their privileged positions within society, benefiting from public support and tax-exempt status, more attention must be given to documenting the reasons the public should then invest in institutions that are responsible not just for teaching and job preparation, but also for research and service to society.

Finally, assessment of civic teaching and service will require deeper exploration of the meaning and measure of civic contributions. Civic learning and service contributions are so poorly understood that even finding simple activity and outcome measures will require an engaged conversation about values and purposes, a definition of terms, and ways to demonstrate evidence of achievement. Framing the conversation in the context of measurement and public accountability can help prevent overly abstract or ideological discussion.

Where to Start

Although civic teaching and service contributions have not been the focus of assessment or accountability measures, aspects of these functions are latent in some of the assessments that have been conducted; some lessons may be learned by reviewing that work. A brief overview of the places which offer the most promising ideas follows. (Please note that this review is not meant to be comprehensive. Additional information about resources is provided in the appendix).

A. Evaluations of service learning. Service learning is the area of inquiry where the most has been done to assess civic teaching and community. Some of the assessments focus on student outcomes from service learning, including, for example, self-reports of active learning, community in the classroom, attitudes toward service and service learning, academic persistence, leadership, and career clarification. Others focus on community service and the degree to which the campus and community are engaged in healthy partnerships. Research shows that the kinds of outcomes that are equated with service learning are *both* cognitive and affective. With regard to cognitive learning, research shows that service helps students learn and retain subject matter content; it also enhances their

ability to synthesize information and to reason analytically. With regard to affective learning, there are positive outcomes on student attitudes and values, including self-esteem, personal aspirations, ability to work with others, and resistance to authoritarianism. For both cognitive and affective learning, these outcomes might be good initial proxies for a discussion about goals for effective citizenship.[4]

B. Assessments of campus climate and campus diversity initiatives. Another area where interesting work has been done is that of campus climate and diversity, where assessments have touched upon the goals of higher education to educate for interpersonal capacities, including citizenship skills. The assumption underlying much of this work is that the changing social and economic fabric of our culture will require that students be able to work collaboratively in ethnically and culturally diverse environments. Respect and sensitivity toward others' values and problem solving, team building, and collaboration skills typically are developed from these initiatives as teaching and learning goals.

Assessment instruments have been developed to help institutional officials "take the temperature" of their campus learning climates in order to define goals and determine means to ensure inclusive and collaborative learning communities. In addition to institutional assessments, the research also shows positive learning outcomes—particularly in learning skills and respect for others—for students who have been educated in diverse campus environments. Thus, the work on diversity and campus climate provides some clues as to how to define and measure aspects of "good citizenship," as well as how to equate these capacities with other dimensions of educational quality.

Two resources are particularly helpful: one is a recent summary of research on diversity by Daryl Smith of Claremont Graduate School and published in the Association of American Colleges and Universities' monograph *Diversity Works*, and the other is some University of Michigan commissioned research contained in "The Compelling Need for Diversity in Higher Education." Both reports summarize a range of research about the consequences of campus diversity for students, and Smith's study includes an annotated bibliography of pertinent research. The Michigan report includes a background study by Patricia Gurin about the relationship between student learning in diverse learning environments and what she terms "democracy outcomes." She uses longitudinal data both from national sources and from the University of Michigan. Her analyses show consistent positive correlations between education in diverse settings and democracy outcomes, including:

- growth in active thinking processes reflective of a more complex, less automatic mode of thought;
- engagement and motivation;
- learning a broad range of intellectual and academic skills;
- value placed on those skills;
- "citizenship engagements" or motivation to participate in activities that affect society and the political structure, as well as participation in community service;
- racial/cultural engagement, a measure of cultural knowledge and of motivation to participate in activities that promote racial understanding; and
- compatability of differences, including the belief that basic values are common across racial and

4. See, for example, Portland State University, *Assessing the Impact of Service Learning: A Workbook of Strategies and Methods*.

ethnic groups, the understanding of the potential constructive aspects of group conflict, and the belief that differences are not inevitably divisive to the social fabric of society.[5]

C. Research on student learning outcomes. There is a considerable body of research on what students actually "get" from college, some of which raises as many questions as answers about the specific relation of college to student learning outcomes. Nonetheless, it is a rich resource of ways to think about and measure student learning outcomes. For example, Alexander Astin has developed a taxonomy to characterize learning outcomes from college (summarized briefly in the box below).[6]

Research on the affective, psychological, and broader behavioral outcomes of college show some correlations between college attendance and a range of desirable social civic capacities:

- individual autonomy and capacity for independence;
- less tendency toward authoritarianism, dogmatism, and ethnocentrism;
- interpersonal relations;
- maturity and general personal development;
- intellectual orientation;
- extent of principled moral reasoning;
- interest in service to others and friendships;
- interest in current affairs and domestic and foreign politics;
- cultural and aesthetic sophistication; and
- voting behavior.

While the research is inconclusive on many of these measures—particularly regarding what it is about college that causes some of these outcomes—the inventory of capacities is nonetheless helpful in thinking through ways to describe and potentially document measurable citizenship skills.

D. Research on the institution as citizen: community service. While surrogate measures of different aspects of civic teaching and learning can be teased out from the literature, there is very little to draw from for measures of *institutional service* to the community. This may be because so much of the assessment and accountability agenda is focused on improving the teaching and learning functions. It also is possible that what otherwise might be labeled "institutional service" is counted instead as research.

Outcomes	**Cognitive:** Higher-order intellectual processes—knowledge acquisition, decisionmaking, synthesis, reasoning	**Affective**: Attitudes and values, self- concepts, aspirations, personality dispositions
Measures	**Psychological**: Internal states or traits of the individual measured through tests or examinations	**Behavioral**: Direct observation of the individual

5. Gurin, 1999, p. 114.

6. Astin, 1973.

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Research by Fran Ansley and John Gaventa reported in a 1997 special edition of *Change Magazine* on "Higher Education and Rebuilding Civic Life" suggests that there are new models of community-university research partnership; these they call these "The New Research." They describe a number of programs and centers that have emerged to tie university research to community and government needs. Some are designed to address particular themes or topics (for example, the environment, urban planning, schools, or housing), and some serve as a basis for connecting faculty interested in action research with community-based organizations.

Nancy Thomas has done work on institutional service for the New England Resource Center for Higher Education and suggests a useful typology for categorizing different types of institutional service activities:

1. cooperative extension and continuing education programs;
2. clinical programs and field-based learning opportunities for students in professional programs;
3. top-down administrative initiatives;
4. centralized administrative-academic units with outreach missions;
5. academically based centers and institutes;
6. faculty professional service and academic outreach;
7. student initiatives;
8. institutional initiatives with an economic or political purpose; and
9. access to facilities and cultural events.[7]

Compendiums of information about university service activities are another common form of assessment as it applies to institutional service. There are a number of examples of institutional efforts to catalog community service activities into comprehensive reports, which describe a host of activities, from community-based faculty scholarship, to clinical activities, university extension, community government partnerships, and student internships with community based organizations. Unfortunately, these reports tend not to synthesize the data; nor do they generalize about how to characterize *the nature* of the institution's service role.

Institutions and systems also periodically develop estimates of their *economic impact* on the surrounding community. Economic impact is not synonymous with community service, but such assessments may offer some ideas about activities that, while centered on the campus, affect the community. Sometimes prepared as a defense against local governments' threats to rescind property tax exemptions (as well as for other reasons), these surveys compile economic impact data by counting funds expended as a consequence of the institution's many activities—for example, employer, construction contractor, purchaser of goods, hospital, clinic, and dormitory managers, research contractors—and estimate their "multiplier effects" on local businesses. Students are a prime example of a good multiplier because they live and spend money in the communities by patronizing local businesses. Economic activity reports can be helpful in stimulating thinking about the many types of organized activities that typically emanate from all kinds of colleges and universities and also about the institution's responsibility to be a "good citizen"

7. Nancy Thomas, forthcoming, p. 15

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itself. Reports may help pave the way further toward thinking about areas of current public concern, such as the use of foreign sweatshop labor to manufacture collegiate sportswear.

E. College ratings services. Private rankings of colleges have been around for a long time, but until the early 1990s, most focused on graduate or professional programs. Since that time, rankings of undergraduate colleges and universities on the basis of various indicators have started to abound, led by several national magazines. Research on ranking services for the Council for Higher Education Accreditation indicates that most of them equate "quality" with fairly traditional peer reviews of reputation and resources, faculty credentials, and undergraduate student selectivity. But a few of them—in particular, *The Princeton Review* surveys—are designed to test student perceptions of college quality, looking at indices such as student service, student activism, campus spiritual life, and diversity.[8] A review of these guides can stimulate thinking about the kinds of things students equate with quality, including candid appraisals of place as a dimension of effectiveness.

One ranking service in particular is designed to assess institutional commitment to "character education," which is at least one dimension of civic education. The Templeton Foundation *Guide to College and Character* is designed to address the eroding role of colleges and universities in character education by identifying outstanding programs that help foster personal and civic responsibility. Foundation materials state:

> Ample evidence suggests that too many of our nation's colleges and universities have experienced an erosion of vision regarding their responsibility to educate students who personally define and affirm a set of moral and civic commitments. The clear and pragmatic task of preparing students for a profession has pushed aside the more controversial and difficult task of inspiring students to lead ethical and civic-minded lives.[9]

Competitions are promoted in a number of areas, including identification of exemplary first-year programs, civic education programs, service learning, academic integrity, and presidential leadership. Criteria that are used to rank institutions include:

- a strong statement of purpose, showing the priority of character development in the institution's mission;
- evidence of active involvement in character education by the institution's leaders, including faculty;
- longevity of the programs;
- evidence of the program's positive impact on students, faculty, the campus, and the community;
- evidence of impact on a significant percentage of students;
- integration of the program into the core curriculum and areas of academic study;
- evidence of a central campus location that provides program information, recruitment and publicity, training, and coordination;
- external recognition or honors; and
- assessment and evidence.

8. For further information, see *The Princeton Review* website: http://www.review.com/college-Rankings.

9. For further information, see the Templeton Foundation website: http://www.templeton.org/character.

F. INCH: The Index of National Civic Health. The 1997 final report of the National Commission on Civic Health, *America's Civic Condition* alerted readers to the deteriorating quality of the nation's civic life and issued a multifaceted call for civic renewal, including specific recommendations about roles for schools, community organizations, and churches. One of the commission's recommendations was for periodic assessments of the quality of civic life, to be carried out by "The Civic Monitoring Project." Such assessments would enhance the public and policymakers' awareness of the condition of civic life. The Index of National Civic Health (INCH) is the assessment tool the commission developed to gauge national civic health. INCH is an average of 22 different indicators, all drawn from generally available data that can be monitored over time, and combined into five categories: political, trust, membership, security, and family. (See the appendix for a more complete description of INCH.)

INCH does not purport to measure higher education's civic contributions—either in student teaching or community service. In fact, the role of higher education as part of either the problem or the solution of the deteriorating national civic health was not mentioned by the commission. Nevertheless, INCH could be adapted to an index of higher education's civic contributions. Categories appropriate to higher education could be developed in place of their five categories. Decisions about what to count should be made at the institutional or state level, but examples might include student learning outcomes; student/community involvement (number of students participating in service learning or other measures of volunteerism); faculty service to communities; institutional/community collaboratives (clinics, school partnerships, housing, number of individuals served by university/community activities, number served in hospitals and clinics; number of students in K–12 partnership collaboratives, children in campus-run daycare centers); and measures of the use of the campus as public space benefiting the community (concerts, public debates, athletic events). INCH is a worthwhile model because it synthesizes many complex indicators into an aggregate index that can be tracked over time.

Developing a Strategy

Even if assessing civic responsibility is "the right thing to do," it also is a tricky thing to do. Assessment will direct institutional attention to the issue of civic roles, possibly at some cost to the institution. An aborted assessment effort could torpedo already fragile institutional commitments to service and civic education. Before embarking on assessment and accountability, an assessment plan should be developed; it should begin with an analysis of hurdles to be overcome and strategies for doing so.

Obstacles to Assessment

While the specifics will differ according to the institution, several potential obstacles to assessment are likely to emerge. The obstacles may result from any of the following:

1. The topic is undefined. No consistent vocabulary exists for framing an assessment of higher education's civic teaching and service roles. What does civic education mean, and how should it be measured? What is the community service role, and what activities constitute pieces of it? What are the dimensions of community service responsibility for a community college? For a residential campus? For a research university? What are specific indicators of the way in which this role is carried out? In the absence of terms in which the topic can be readily discussed, assessments make little sense.

2. The civic teaching and service roles are not priorities. Part of the reason civic teaching and service activities are not assessed or accounted for stems from the fact that these roles are not a high priority for either the institutions or their patrons (students, parents, states, and other benefactors). Many believe that effective undergraduate education, preparing students for jobs, and contributing to economic development through both basic and applied research are higher education's essential purposes. Surveys indicate that most students enroll in college primarily to get a good job and have a better life. Institutions do not have the resources to do everything, and assessment and improvement of something no one is specifically asking for legitimately can be given low priority.

3. No one within the college or university has the job assignment. Civic teaching and community service may be everyone's responsibility but no one's job. Students' civic learning is presumed to be a byproduct of the collegiate educational experience—a product of students' "fusion" with the faculty, the curriculum, and the co-curriculum. Likewise, many believe that institutions serve society through teaching and research, not through a separate set of activities. Building successful assessment strategies will require both assigning the responsibility for assessment to an individual in the institution and discussing the ways in which the different aspects of campus life contribute to civic teaching and service.

4. It is difficult to separate the civic roles from the teaching and research roles. The civic education and service roles are truly interdependent on the institution's teaching and research missions. More than teaching or even research, it is difficult to isolate these capacities from other dimensions of institutional effectiveness. Can an assessment of the "civic dimension" be separated from other assessments? Should it be? Those who are familiar with typical academic approaches to measuring joint products between teaching and research are aware of some of the analytic contortions that higher education is accustomed to performing with regard to these kinds of issues. There must be a more straightforward way to think about civic teaching and community service, but how?

5. Service activities are not the administrative responsibility of the college or university. Many community-oriented activities are not administered by the college or university, even though they may depend on or involve university employees or students. Examples include certain activities at university research parks and some university/community activities in major urban centers. Whether these are properly labeled "service" or "instruction" or "research" is unclear, though it is clear that insofar as the university is concerned, they do not exist if they are not budgeted inside the academy. Documenting these efforts as legitimate institutional activities or outcomes will require some capacity to know how to track people and their contributions, even if the money that funds them comes from outside the institution.

6. Civic education and community service issues are too values-laden to be "safe." These are not consensus issues. Some people believe that civic education is the job of K–12 schools and therefore is inappropriate in higher education. Some believe that colleges should educate students to participate in the global marketplace rather than to be effective members of a democratic society. (Others believe these are two sides of the same coin.) Still others liken citizenship education to sex education: it is best left to the church or the family.

Getting Started: Building Successful Assessment Capacities

1. Start with assessments conducted in the context of institutional mission and as a dimension of quality. A solid argument can be made that clarity about terminology needs to precede assessment and that the first stage in the assessment agenda therefore needs to be an inquiry into the meaning of effective citizenship and institutional service. While that is intellectually correct, getting started with assessment is a good way to promote a discussion about terminology without getting bogged down in abstractions. In addition, the terms will be defined differently from institution to institution according to their mission, history, and future objectives. The expedient way to proceed is to begin the assessment agenda at the institutional level in the context of mission and as a dimension of quality, rather than as something wholly separate from "normal" institutional measures of quality. Integrating civic assessment into institutional quality review also puts the issue squarely onto the agenda of existing quality assessments done through program review, institutional strategic planning, accreditation, and state accountability reporting. Not only does this help frame the civic role as a dimension of quality, but it also helps avoid duplication of effort.

2. Leadership commitment. A successful assessment strategy must begin with a commitment by institutional leaders to engage the agenda. If enhancing the civic teaching and learning and community service roles is not a priority, then assessment probably is not a worthwhile endeavor. Ideally, leadership should begin with the college president, though he or she does not have to be directly involved. In fact, in certain instances, visible presidential leadership might prove counterproductive. The agenda should be managed by a core of individuals including the academic vice president, the budget office, faculty, and students. From that core the capacity to build the agenda by linking with others—including governing board members and community leaders as a first priority—can be developed.

3. Test stakeholder perceptions and build awareness. The assessment process should begin with a systematic evaluation of the perceptions and values of key stakeholders to determine what priority they give civic teaching and community service and to learn more about the language used to characterize the civic role. This could be used to assess views within the institution—those of faculty, administrators, governing board members, and students—and from external communities, including the business community, parents, local community leaders, and statewide elected officials. Questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions are all appropriate means of performing this assessment. The instrument should be designed to capture information about how people think and feel about the issues, as well as the values that frame how they talk about them. Do people think about these issues? When they do, do they feel positively about them? Do they think about them a good deal and feel passionately about them? If they are not interested in the civic teaching or institutional service roles, what are their priorities for higher education?

The assumption that the primary benefactors of higher education do not believe that civic contributions are a priority may well be wrong; it is possible that they constitute a latent rather than an explicit priority. Preliminary assessments of the priority major institutional stakeholders give to the civic teaching and service roles is essential to developing a strategy to strengthen these roles.

4. Build a strategy to sustain a values-based conversation. The initial test of perceptions is valuable in part because it will reveal whether stakeholder groups

Sample Assessment Matrix

Dimension	*Teaching and Learning*	*Institutional Community Service*	*External Accountability*
Goals			
Indicators			
Measures			

characterize civic and service issues differently, as well as the extent to which the topic is "ideologically loaded." One of the unfortunate realities of our culture is that values-based conversations sometimes are perceived as political or ideological. This is likely to be a bigger problem on some campuses than on others. For example faith-related colleges typically find it less difficult to engage in conversation about values as a dimension of institutional mission than others. If public discussion of the civic role is perceived as having been dominated by one group or another, or if it deteriorates into another version of the "culture wars", then it is likely to be interesting but not task oriented. Campus leaders seeking to sustain this agenda will have to test the ideological issues on campus and strive to include diverse groups in the process.

5. Develop an assessment matrix, using separate cells for teaching, service, and accountability. While it is important to combine the assessments of civic teaching and service and the accountability agenda, they are sufficiently distinct that the actual instruments should be developed separately. Each should have at least three elements: goals, indicators, and measures. The data from these three pieces can be reaggregated, and overall institutional evaluations can be made in the context of broad-based institutional goals. An assessment matrix similar to that shown below can help guide the discussion.

Where possible, indicators should be reasonably easy to measure, yielding information that can be monitored over time. Searching for "perfect" indicators is likely to be less helpful than agreeing on some that will be easy to measure and that will enable a number of indicators to be tracked over time. The assessments should build on existing student and institutional assessment instruments to get at information which can serve as a proxy for aspects of the civic role. For example, most campuses distribute annual questionnaires of student perceptions and interests. Others routinely survey employers to learn of their training needs and degree of satisfaction with the institution's students and curriculum. Many also try to conduct exit interviews with at least a sample of graduates. All of these methods should yield information that can be used for civic teaching and service assessments.

6. Seek partner institutions to help build the public accountability agenda. The public accountability agenda will be strengthened greatly if a number

of institutions in a region join together in a multi-institutional assessment and accountability agenda. A multi-institutional strategy is particularly important to capture cross-institutional contributions to the teaching role, since the majority of students no longer receive their education from one or even two institutions, but instead are "autodidactic," largely self-taught, and move rapidly from one organization to another. Collaborating with other colleges on this agenda will build the capacity for public accountability that goes beyond the contributions of an individual institution. This issue is particularly well suited for multi-campus treatments in statewide reporting formats.

7. Keep it short and clear. Too often, higher education quality assessments become so intricate that they implode from their own weight—useful for neither reviews of goals and performance nor external communication of capacities. Excessive complexity is a natural and predictable result of the consultative process that typically is used to develop assessment instruments in higher education. But for this kind of work, it is better to err on the side of simplicity than complexity. To ensure the clarity of the assessment, knowledgeable and credible individuals who have not been directly involved in the process should be asked to critique it at different stages of development. It should be their responsibility to maintain focus and, if possible, brevity.

Summary and Conclusion

Higher education does a poor job of assessing and accounting for its civic teaching and community service roles. Yet assessment and accountability can be critical strategic tools for strengthening these roles. While no existing models can be adopted in their entirety for civic assessments, similar work has been done and can serve as both a reference point and a springboard for ideas. Civic assessment should be approached as a dimension of institutional quality, and it should be framed in the context of individual institutions' missions. At the same time, institutional assessments should be developed with attention to developing public accountability capacities, since external public communication is essential to the success of the agenda. This is not a narrow or technical job that can be foisted off on the institutional research office or left exclusively in the hands of the academic senate; successful assessments of civic capacities require the commitment of institutional leaders and should involve both administrative and academic personnel. An assessment strategy should be developed that anticipates the particular institutional hurdles that will need to be overcome, including strategies to ensure that the public conversation about goals and values is not monopolized by particular ideological factions within the community. Instruments that use readily available data that can be replicated and measured over time will be most helpful.

Institutions interested in engaging the civic agenda will find the development of assessment instruments a particularly helpful way to initiate a task-oriented and meaningful conversation about purpose, priority, measures, and effectiveness. There is some science to assessment, but it is not rocket science. With commitment and good will, as well as some imagination, it can and should be done.

APPENDIX

Resources for Further Information

The **American Council on Education's (ACE) Higher Education and Democracy Forum** is a source of information about institutional community service activities. For its first meeting, held in June 1998 in Tallahassee, Florida, the Forum asked participating institutions to provide listings of their institutional service activities. This compendium of information may be obtained from ACE by requesting the background papers for the conference. Contact ACE, One Dupont Circle, Eighth Floor, Washington, DC 20036, (202) 939-9331.

The **Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U)**, in conjunction with the University of Maryland, has developed a comprehensive resource-sharing network for information about diversity initiatives, including a database of research about evaluations of campus diversity projects. In addition to serving as an entry point to the literature, this is an excellent guide to institutions that have experimented with diversity initiatives. Contact AAC&U, 1818 R Street, NW, Washington, DC 20009, (202) 884-7419, website: http://www.aacu-edu.org. Also, visit the AAC&U and University of Maryland database on campus diversity initiatives at: http://www.inform.umd.edu/diversity.

The **California Postsecondary Education Commission** developed a "Campus Climate Assessment Instrument" that has been used successfully on campuses throughout California. The Western Association of Schools and Colleges—the regional accrediting commission for California—has embraced the instrument as a means of encouraging campuses to engage in self-assessment of campus diversity. The commission also sponsored research to measure higher education's contributions to the California economy. Contact The California Postsecondary Education Commission, 1303 J Street, Suite 500, Sacramento, California 95815, (916) 322-8028, and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, PO Box 9990, Mills College, Oakland, CA 94610, (510) 632-5000.

Campus Compact is the national network of nearly 600 colleges and universities and 20 state networks committed to student citizenship and values development through public and community service. Oriented both to service learning and students' and campuses' civic development, Campus Compact has developed a substantial body of research on service learning and its consequences. In addition to providing statistical information about basic trends in service learning, Campus Compact is a resource for information about which college campuses are involved in both service learning and community service. For more information, contact Campus Compact, Box 175, Brown University, Providence RI 02912, (401) 863-1119, website: http://www.compact.org

The **Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA)** has developed an *Almanac of Quality Assurance*, a guide to the forms of external quality assurance review in higher education, ranging from accreditation to state licensure, state accountability reporting, and external ratings services. Copies of *The Almanac* can be obtained from the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, One Dupont Circle, Fifth Floor, Washington, DC 20036, (202) 955-6126, website: http://www.chea.org

The **Corporation for National Service** is the body created in 1992 by federal legislation designed to promote community service in higher education. A public/private partnership, the corporation oversees three national service initiatives: AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve America, and the National Senior Service Corps. The legislation that created the corporation requires ongoing evaluation activities, including periodic efforts to define performance goals and measure performance indicators. For more information, contact Corporation for National Service, 1201 New York Avenue, NW, Washington, DC, (202) 606-5000, website: http://www.nationalservice.org

The **Higher Education Research Institute (HERI)**, at the University of California, Los Angeles, is one of the best national repositories of data on student learning and college outcomes. HERI has managed the national annual survey of incoming college freshmen for more than 25 years and is a good source of longitudinal data, as well as many current projects on aspects of this topic. For more information, contact Alexander Astin, Director, at HERI, 3005 Moore Hall, University of California, Los Angeles, CA 90095, (310) 825-8331.

Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis has been at the forefront of assessing service learning in the context of overall institutional change strategies. Their assessments focus both on the institutional level (the degree to which campuses are effectively engaged in their communities) and on the long-term impact of service learning on students. The campus-based assessment has three stages: (1) developing of a portfolio of activities; (2) rating the campus effort; and (3) making recommendations for future work. In addition, it is beginning to work on a way to assess the effects of long-term and intensive community work on leadership development, educational aspirations and persistence, career choice, and understanding of the non-profit sector. Contact Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, Center for Public Service and Leadership, 815 W. Michigan Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-5164, (317) 278-2370.

INCH: Index of National Civic Health measures five components of civic life. (The components' "weights" are indicated below.) Data were compiled beginning in 1970, when the index was normed to equal 100.

INCH Components	Elements and Weights of the Total
Political	Voter turnout (10%) and other political activities (signing a petition, writing to Congress, attending rallies or speeches, working for a political party, making a speech, writing an article, writing a letter to the newspaper, belonging to a reform group, and running for or holding political office (1.1% each)
Trust	Trust in others (10%) and confidence in the federal government (10%)
Membership	Membership in at least one group and/or church attendance (6.7%), charitable contributions (6.7%), and local participation, attending local meetings, serving on local committees, and serving as an officer of a local group (2.2% each)
Security	Youth murderers per youth population (6.7%), fear of crime (6.7%), and survey-reported crime per population (6.7%)
Family	Divorce (10%) and non-marital births

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The National Commission on Civic Renewal's final report can be obtained via the Internet at: http://www.puaf.umd.edu/civicrenewal/finalreport/ar...rica's_civic_condition.

The **National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS)** is just beginning a multi-year project, funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts, to develop a national assessment instrument for the "engaged student." The instrument will be used to assess the contributions of learning experiences and the campus environment to student learning. Vice President Peter Ewell has been one of the leading researchers and advocates for student learning assessments as an essential dimension of institutional instructional quality. For more information, contact Peter Ewell, Vice President, National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, 1540 30th Street, Room 173, Boulder, CO 80303, (303) 497-0301.

The **New England Resource Center for Higher Education (NERCHE)** is located at the University of Massachusetts Boston. NERCHE's mission is to foster higher education institutional improvement and change through collaborative projects and consultation. Work initiated under the leadership of Ernest Lytton and Zelda Gamson continues under the directorship of Deborah Hirsch and includes a number of special services for the engaged campus through the faculty professional service project (FPSP), the portfolio project, and "Project Colleague" to help faculty develop skills in community organizing, collaboration, and project management. For more information, contact Deborah Hirsch, Executive Director, New England Resource Center for Higher Education, Graduate College of Education, University of Massachusetts Boston, Boston, MA 02125 (617) 287-7740, e-mail: nerche@umb.edu.

The **Portland State University Center for Academic Excellence** has produced an excellent handbook, *Assessing the Impact of Service Learning: A Workbook of Strategies and Methods*. The handbook focuses not just on student learning outcomes, but on ways to assess the impact of service learning on all four of its constituencies: students, faculty, the community, and the institution. Contact the Center for Academic Excellence, Portland State University, PO Box 751-CAE, Portland, OR 97207-0751, (503) 725-5642.

The **Templeton Foundation** *Guide to College and Character* can be accessed through the following website: http://www.templeton.org/Character.

The **Walt Whitman Center for the Culture and Politics of Democracy** at Rutgers University is a center for the study of democracy and culture. Director Benjamin Barber has developed models to measure dimensions of citizenship which can be helpful in defining goals for higher education's civic teaching role. For more information, contact the Walt Whitman Center for the Culture and Politics of Democracy, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, Hickman Hall, Douglas Campus, 89 George Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901-1411, (732) 932-6861.

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